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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001392

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [PREL](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT QUASHES EXTREMISTS, BUT NOT  
THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

REF: A. ABUJA 1379

[1](#)B. ABUJA 1377

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Anthony R. Eterno for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: According to Embassy contacts, other reporting channels, and local news reporting, Nigerian military stormed extremist strongholds in Borno, Bauchi, Yobe, and Kano states on July 28, effectively neutralizing Boko Haram, its followers, and its leader Mohammed Yusuf. Minimal violence directed at police was reported in Katsina, but it was quickly extinguished. There have been no additional reports of attacks in Bauchi, Yobe, Adamawa, or Kano, other than small skirmishes from extremists on the run from military and police forces. Unconfirmed reports put the total death toll in Borno at 300, mostly extremists, but including some police and military personnel. Meanwhile, at the peak of the GON's military intervention to end the violent attacks, President Yar'Adua traveled to Brazil for four days. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) On July 28, Nigerian troops from the Third Armored Division in Jos, Plateau state, were ordered into Maiduguri's Railway Terminus Area (MRTA), reputed stronghold of Boko Haram, to route out extremists responsible for attacks against Borno state police and government facilities for three days. One of Nigeria's leading newspapers reported the scene as "the mother of all battles," describing the military as having arrived in six armored tanks and five military trucks loaded with troops who wiped out 200 extremists attacking them with grenades, and bows and arrows, and other hand-made weapons. In Bauchi state, Africa Independent Television showed a video of a bulldozer demolishing the residence of an alleged leader of Boko Haram, while in Katsina a policeman was wounded as security agencies forced extremists to flee and abandon a police station they were planning to burn. There were no reports of additional violence in Yobe and Kano states. Meanwhile, President Yar'Adua spoke to reporters for the first time since the first wave of attacks on July 26, assuring the country that "the situation is completely under control," as he boarded his plane for his four-day visit to Brazil.

[1](#)3. (C) Yar'Adua also informed reporters that security agencies had been monitoring and tracking the activities of Yusuf and Boko Haram for several years. He also revealed with some degree of detail that Yusuf and Boko Haram have

been "organizing, penetrating our society, procuring arms, and learning how to make explosives and bombs," adding that "once the military operation concludes in Maiduguri, there will be continuous security surveillance all over the northern states to fish out remnants of the group who are to be dealt with squarely and promptly." (Note: Yar'Adua's assertion that the GON has been monitoring and tracking Yusuf's activities is for the most part accurate and does not differ significantly with what Mission Nigeria has learned through other reporting channels. End Note.)

14. (U) According to Assistant Zonal Coordinator for the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Apollos Jediel, the number of people displaced from the conflict in Maiduguri has risen to approximately 4,000. Meanwhile, the streets of Maiduguri are still empty, and all shops, schools, and offices within eight kilometers from the MRTA remained closed. ATM machines and mobile communication are also out of service, and the official 2100 to 0900 hours curfew is still in effect. Religious services have been canceled, and in some instances officially suspended, while both Christian and Islamic leaders continue to condemn the attacks. Jama'atu Nasir Islam (JNI) Acting Secretary General Malam Abdulkarim Mu'azu Palladan told reporters that "JNI will not fold its arms and watch the carnage and madness that is going on in the country in the name of Islam,8 then informed them that "the Central Fatwa Committee would soon be convened to deliberate on the teachings of this group (Boko Haram)."

15. (C) Comment: After four days of Boko Haram's assaults on police and other local government institutions, Nigerian

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military swept in to root out, capture, or kill most of Mohammed Yusuf's young Boko Haram followers. Condemnation for the extremists actions by prominent Muslim leaders and scholars should further isolate Mohammed Yusuf and his Boko Haram followers as fringe radicals. End Comment.

16. (U) This cable was coordinated with Consulate Lagos.  
SANDERS